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FILE ONLY

KIDNAPED U.S. ENVOY ALIVE

On videotape, he says 2 other hostages safe

London (UPI)—William Buckley, an American diplomat kidnaped in Beirut last March, appeared alive and well in a videotape filmed just a week ago and said two other American hostages in Lebanon were also safe.

"Today, the 22d January, 1985, I am well and my friends Benjamin Weir and Jeremy Levin are also well. We ask that our government take action for our release quickly," Buckley said in the tape acquired by Visnews, an international news film agency, and released yesterday.

The 56-second tape was the first proof that Buckley, a political officer at the U.S. Embassy, survived the kidnap ordeal in Beirut last March 16.

Weir, 60, a Presbyterian minister, was kidnaped by gunmen last May

and Levin, 52, Beirut chief of the Cable News Network—the U.S. television network, was seized last March.

There was no word about two other Americans kidnaped recently in Lebanon—Rev. Martin Lawrence Jen-co, a Catholic priest kidnaped Jan. 8, and Peter Kilburn, 60, a librarian at the American University who disappeared last November.

The identity of the kidnapers is unknown. In recent weeks, Western journalists in Beirut have received calls saying American hostages were taken by the Islamic Jihad, a shadowy terror group that supports Iran's Ayatollah Ruollah Khomeini.

The Islamic Jihad, or Holy War, has claimed responsibility for a series of terrorist attacks on U.S., French

and Kuwaiti targets in the Middle East in recent years, including the Oct. 23, 1983, suicide truck bombing of the Marine peace-keeping headquarters in Beirut that killed 241 American servicemen.

The film, amateurishly produced, showed Buckley reading a Beirut newspaper, published on Jan. 22, but the background gave no clues about where he was held.

In Washington, State Department officials confirmed the man in the film was Buckley. President Reagan expressed relief that the missing Americans were safe.

"We haven't forgotten they're in captivity, but I don't think it would be productive for us to talk about what we're doing," he said.



William Buckley: "I am well and my friends ... are also well."